



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIVE INDICTED FOR IDENTITY THEFT FRAUD USING STOLEN PERSONAL INFORMATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that five defendants were indicted by a federal grand jury today for conspiracy to commit identity theft.

Ganiyat Adejumo Ishola, 25, **Spiro S. Grapsas**, 57, and **Craig Darnell Parker**, 36, all of Chicago, Ill., **Abdulazeez Temitayo Surakatu**, 31, address unknown, and **Roy Ndidi Eledan**, 40, of Streamwood, Ill., were charged in an indictment returned by a grand jury in Kansas City. **Surakatu** and **Eledan** are both permanent residents of the United States from Nigeria.

The indictment alleges all five defendants participated in a conspiracy to commit fraud by stealing personal identification information, consisting of names and Social Security numbers, from an employee roster from the office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Columbia, Mo. The NRCS is a department within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

According to the indictment, the personal financial information of the NRCS employees was stolen with the intention of committing a variety of financial frauds, including using the names and Social Security numbers to apply for credit card accounts at Bank One of Chicago, Ill. The defendants allegedly accessed the Web site of First USA Bank and completed an application over the Internet using the stolen identity information of the NRCS employees. They subsequently used the credit card accounts to obtain convenience checks, the indictment alleges, which they deposited into accounts at other financial institutions in the Chicago area.

Ishola, while working as a part-time clerk at the NRCS office in Columbia, had access to employee rosters that contained personal identifying information for each employee, including the employees' names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, and home addresses. Between Jan. 14, 2002, and Aug. 15, 2003, **Ishola** allegedly stole 50 pages of the roster, each containing

approximately 25 employee names and identifying information. When she was terminated from her employment at NRCS on Aug. 14, 2003, **Ishola** moved to Chicago and allegedly took the stolen roster with her.

After arriving in Chicago, the indictment alleges, some of that stolen information was given to **Surakatu**, who allegedly obtained a counterfeit Virginia driver's license in the name of one of the employees. On July 23, 2003, **Surakatu** allegedly used the counterfeit Virginia driver's license to apply for a Target department store credit card at a Target store in Chicago and was approved for a credit line of \$8,500.

On six separate occasions between Oct. 24 and Nov. 9, 2003, the indictment alleges that an unknown member of the conspiracy used a computer to make a credit card application over the Internet by accessing a First USA computer system, using the personal identification information of an NRCS employee. In each case, the application was approved, with a credit limit of either \$24,000 or \$25,000, along with convenience checks drawn on the VISA credit card account.

Eledan allegedly participated in the conspiracy by providing a bank account where convenience checks could be deposited. According to the indictment, **Eledan** and **Surakatu** agreed that the proceeds of the fraud would be divided between them, with **Eledan** receiving 20 percent of the proceeds and **Surakatu** receiving the remaining 80 percent.

In December 2003, **Eledan** allegedly requested the assistance of **Grapsas**, who agreed to participate in the conspiracy by providing a mailing address where credit cards could be delivered.

The indictment alleges that, on three separate occasions between Nov. 23 and Dec. 5, 2003, **Eledan** deposited First USA VISA convenience checks totaling \$50,500 into his checking account. On Nov. 18, 2003, **Eledan** allegedly contacted First USA and requested an automated clearing house balance transfer in the amount of \$5,000 from a fraudulent VISA credit card account, which was completed on Nov. 24, 2003.

On Dec. 1, 2003, **Eledan** allegedly contacted **Parker** to request assistance with the continued execution of the scheme by having **Parker** make available a bank account where convenience checks could be deposited. According to the indictment, **Parker** opened a new account for this purpose at Charter One Bank in Chicago. On Dec. 4, 2003, **Parker** allegedly accepted an \$18,500 convenience check from **Eledan**, which he deposited into the new account.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John E. Cowles. It was investigated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General, Chicago, Ill., Police Department, U.S. Postal Inspection Service (Chicago, Ill., office), Bureau of Immigration

and Customs Enforcement, Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General, Department of Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, and the National White Collar Crime Center.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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